

NY/NJ Harbor Wide Survey – An Area Wide Cooperative Effort

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Biographical Sketch of Author

Veronica Craw is an environmental scientist with the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners and has been conducting water quality sampling in the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary for over four years. She holds a BA in Biology, with a specialization in Marine Science, from Boston University. Veronica serves as the representative for the New Jersey Harbor Dischargers Group at the interstate NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program's Management Committee, and Pathogens and Nutrients Subcommittee meetings. She is also an active participant in the local Watershed Management Area 4 (WMA4) stakeholder meetings and holds the position of Chairperson of the WMA4 Public Advisory Committee.

Abstract

The New Jersey Harbor Dischargers Group (NJHDG) is initiating a long-term ambient water quality monitoring program in the New Jersey waters of the New York/New Jersey Harbor. The NJHDG consists of ten agencies, representing twelve sewage treatment plants, which discharge to the New Jersey portion of the Harbor Estuary.

The primary goals of the long-term water quality monitoring program include providing baseline data reflecting the current status of water quality in the Harbor, and documenting changes in water quality over time. In the absence of this type of data, assumptions made by regulatory authorities about compliance with water quality standards in the New Jersey portion of the Harbor could be based on inaccurate modeling estimates, which can reflect poorly on NJHDG member facilities, ultimately leading to inappropriate regulatory decisions. This data collection effort will allow NJHDG facilities to collectively utilize their scarce resources to best meet water quality objectives.

This NJHDG program is the first multi-agency watershed-wide sampling effort undertaken in the NY/NJ Harbor. Technical assistance is being provided by key federal and state agencies including: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), and the Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC).